1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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372 the island. Sheep dung was also used. In ancient times, when the population was far more dense, the fuel problem must have been serious. Yet the natives did not seem to worry about it. Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 292) saw twelve fires burning at the same place morning and evening. Natives burned the straps or tops of sugar cane, plantain heads, and probably branches from the numerous shrubs scattered about the island.

## OVEN

354 Before the introduction of European cooking utensils, natives cooked (*ootu*) all their food in underground ovens (*umu*), similar to those in other parts of Polynesia. Wherever remains of settlements are found there are ancient ovens also.

The ovens are pentagonal in shape, formed of five slabs, generally curbs taken from some house. The slabs are buried in the ground to varying depths and project only 10 or 15 cm. above the surface enclosing a space 2 feet in diameter. My principal informant [801] called my attention to the fact that the stones of the ovens always numbered five or seven and that an odd number of stones was imposed by superstition. I noticed only one oven with six slabs on the island. A screen or covered roof protected the oven from the wind (130, vol. 2, p. 256). This type of oven is no longer used.

Modern natives make earth ovens only when they are in camp or preparing a banquet.

354 A hole about 2 feet deep is dug, on the bottom of which are placed large stones
252 covered with grass. On this first layer, stones the size of the fist are piled up in a heap with small branches, scraps of wood (*hukahuka*) and grass. Fire is set to the pile (*ka te umu* or *puhi te umu*). The glowing stones are evenly fitted (*uru*) and spread with two sticks handled like tongs. The food—meat, sweet potatoes, yams, taro—is placed (*tao*) in the oven on banana or ti leaves to prevent burning. More hot stones are spread against or above (*puapua*) the leaves protecting the food. Formerly bundles were covered (*pengopengo*) with grass (*tauetu*), today with a sack. Soil is shoveled (*tanu hai oone*) over the pit. After 2 hours the food is generally considered sufficiently cooked and is removed (*maoa*). To cook food well is *kukokope a te umu*. The entrails of the animals are roasted (*hatui*) on the glowing stones of the *umu*.

## PREPARATION OF FOOD

252 Cooked food is never pounded on Easter Island, and probably never was in the past, since no food pounders have ever been found there. Breadfruit and taro are the staples in other parts of Polynesia and are mashed. Breadfruit does not grow on Easter Island and taro is far less important in diet than sweet potatoes which are never pounded. Pounding food requires a great deal of water and water has always been scarce on Easter Island.

231 Formerly the natives were reluctant to shed the blood of any animal. This may have had a religious background but it is more probable that the natives simply did not want to waste any blood. Chickens were strangled by
252 twisting the neck; larger animals, such as goats and dogs, were suffocated by burying the head in a hole or in smoke. The hair was then singed and, with-

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Judging from the holes in the curbs, rafters were numerous; if they all joined a main post the interior of the house must have been rather obstructed by them. The rafters were connected by purlins "reaching along the whole length at two feet distance from each other." They gave strength to the whole structure and supported the thatching.

To build a house is *hato*, the term used in other parts of Polynesia for thatching. The Easter Island vocabularies give *hakamanga* for roof. The end of the house was called *pini*. The central ridgepost is said to have had magic in it, though present natives are unable to tell how it was manifest. The different elements of the frame were lashed together with ropes of *hau* bark (*hahau*) and great care was taken that the number of knots used in lashing should be odd, for fear of the bad luck connected with even figures.

On Easter Island, wood was a precious and rare material, so when a house had to be abandoned because of fleas, "it was lifted by a dozen men who carried it to another spot, fastening it with poles stuck into the ground" (230, vol. 6, p. 122).

## Thatching

Roggeveen (186, p. 118) describes the thatching of houses in the following terms:

> . . . Then the interstices, which are all of oblong shape, are closed up and covered over with a sort of rush or long grass, which they put on very thickly, layer upon layer, and fasten on the inner side with lashing . . . so that they are always as well shut in against wind and rain as those who live beneath thatched roofs in Holland.

According to Tepano, who saw houses of ancient type in his youth, the thatch (*hatunga*) was made of three superimposed layers:

> The first was a covering of mats (*moenga*); the second, a layer of sugar-cane leaves (*rau toa*); the third, a layer of grass (*mauku-ato*). The mats extended on the frame were similar to sleeping mats and were made of rushes (*Scirpus riparius*) sewn together with *hau* cords. The accuracy of this statement is borne out by Bernizet (130, vol. 2, p. 256): "The whole [structure] is covered with rushes of nine or ten lines diameter at the lower end, united together like mats, by threads twisted with the hand." The use of sugar cane is mentioned by G. Forster (83, vol. 1, p. 570), who describes the thatching as composed of "small sticks [purlins], and covered with a neat mat-work of sugar cane leaves, leaned on each row of stakes, forming a very sharp ridge or angle at the top and resting firmly on the ground at the bottom." The word "mat-work" may suggest that the Easter Islanders employed for thatching a method widely known in the rest of Polynesia (Cook Islands, Tahiti, Samoa, etc.) which consisted in covering the house with sheets made by doubling pandanus or sugar-cane leaves over a length of cane and sewing them together with a slender rod or coconut midrib. The threading of the midribs through the leaves is termed *tui* on Mangareva; and the verb *tuitui* means, on Easter Island, to "tie together, bind together." The number of purlins used in the framework is more appropriate for lashing of bundles of leaves and of grass than for the simple covering of sugar-cane sheets. Geiseler (87, p. 39), who did not see houses of the old type but describes them from information received, says that the frame was of *toro-miro* wood and that the intervals between the elements "were interwoven" with dry banana leaves (which he erroneously calls *hau*), then covered with sugar-cane stalks and leaves, and finally with long grass. Zumbohm (230, vol. 6, p. 122) likewise states that the huts were thickly covered with reed, sugar-cane stalks, or other grass so that the rain could not percolate into the interior. Neither description refers to sheets or mats, nor do they stress any differences in the way these layers were put on. My informant asserted that

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to a relative, who was the father of an old man from whom we managed to obtain it. When the time came to hand it over to us, the late owner began to cling to it affectionately, and say that he "wept much at the thought of its going to England"; as, however, the bargain had already been completed, we remained obdurate, and at the time of writing Hotu resides with Ko Tori at the Royal College of Surgeons.

The Miru were unique in other ways; they were the only group which had a headman or chief, who was known as the "ariki," or sometimes as the "ariki-mau," the great chief, to distinguish him from the "ariki-paka," a term which seems to have been given to all other members of the clan.[1] The office of ariki-mau was hereditary, and he was the only man who was obliged to marry into his own clan. It was customary when he was old and feeble that he should resign in favour of his son. There are various lists of the succession of chiefs, counted from the first immigrant, Hotu-matua. The oldest lists are those given by Bishop Jaussen[2] and by Admiral Lapelin,[3] which contain some thirty names. Thomson gives one with fifty-seven. In our day there was admittedly much uncertainty about the sequence, but the number was said to be thirty,[4] and two independent lists were obtained. All these categories differ, though they contain many of the same names, particularly at the beginning and end.

The last man to fill the post of ariki with its original dignity was Ngaara; he died shortly before the Peruvian raid, and becomes a very real personage to anyone inquiring into the history of the island. He was short, and very stout, with white skin, as had all his family, but so heavily tattooed as to look black. He wore feather hats of various descriptions, and was hung round both back and front with little wooden ornaments, which jingled as he walked. When our authorities can remember him his wife was dead and he lived with his son Kaimokoi. It was not permitted to see them eat, and no one but the servants was allowed to enter the house. His headquarters were at Anakena, the cove on the island where, according to tradition, the first canoe landed.

[1] Evidence on this head was rather contradictory, but no Miru could be found, male or female, to whom the title was not given.
[2] "L'Ile de Paques," M. Tépano Jaussen, *Bulletin Géographique*, 1893, p. 241.
[3] *Revue Maritime et Coloniale*, vol. xxxv, p. 109.
[4] Thirty is, however, a very favourite number: cf. the folk-tales.